MEREDITH FINCH • IG GUARA
ROSE
image
14

The Story So Far...

In the land of Ttereve, magical ability is a death sentence.

As an epic battle between the rebel forces and the Fallen commences, Rose finds herself drawn to the wraiths who were once, just like her, Guardians.

Vulnerable in her uncertainty, Rose falls under Drucilla's spell and is forced to confront a future without her friends if she doesn't surrender.

The battle ebbs and flows based on the resolve in the heart of one young woman and just as Rose's triumph over fear and hatred seems certain, she is brought low by an unforeseen foe.

Rose discovers evil comes in many forms and the threat to Ttereve is more sinister than anyone could have imagined in the next exciting chapter of ROSE.

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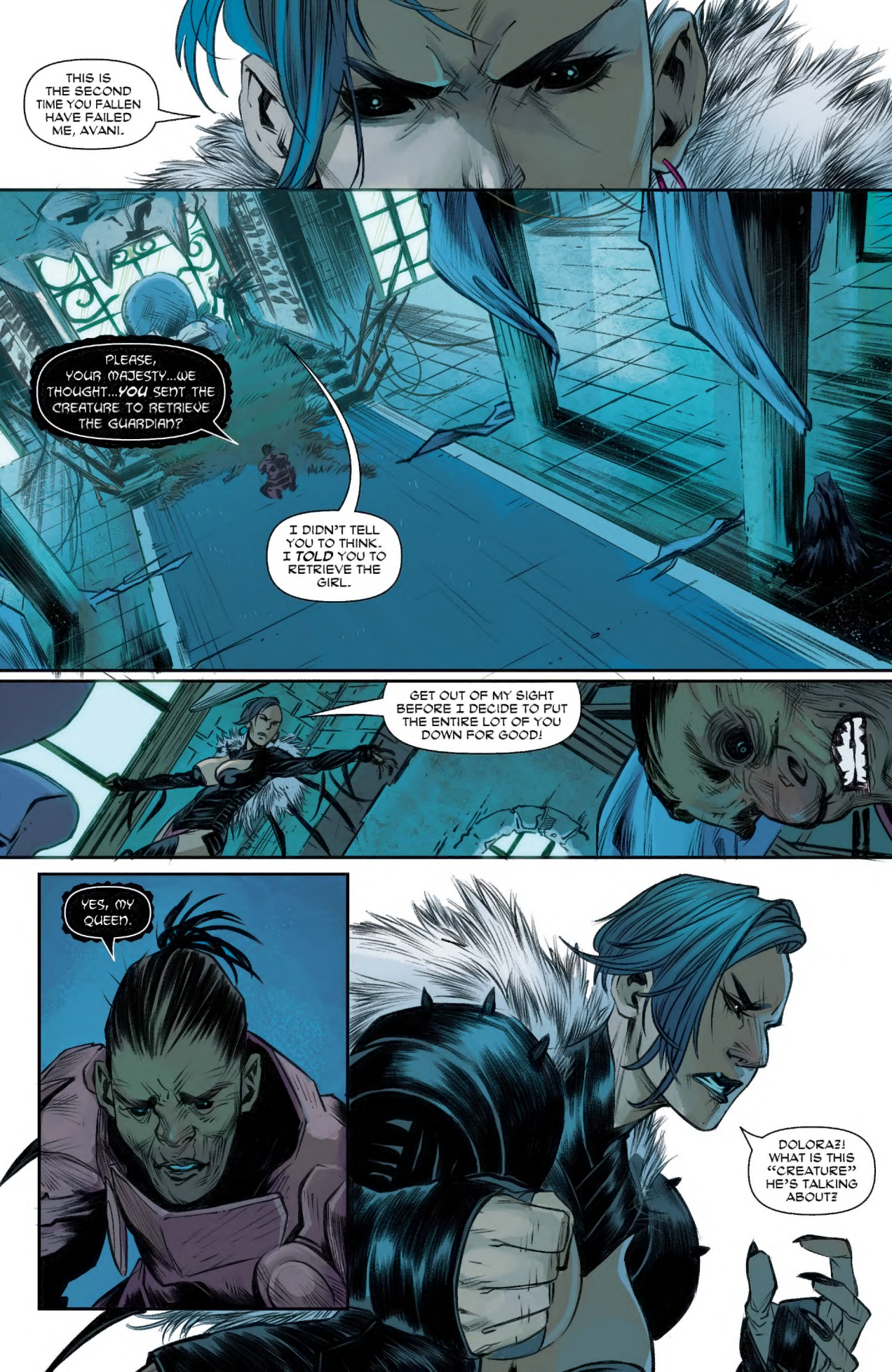
WELL, WELL, WELL... OUR LITTLE GUARDIAN HAS DECIDED TO JOIN US.
WHO ARE YOU? AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THORNE?
THORNE IS NO LONGER YOUR CONCERN. HE BELONGS TO DRUCILLA NOW.
THORNE DOESN'T BELONG TO ANYONE! ESPECIALLY DRUCILLA!
WHERE IS SHE ANYWAY? SHOULDN'T SHE BE HERE TO GLOAT?
YOU GUARDIANS ARE ALL THE SAME. YOU WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT OTHERS, WHEN YOU REALLY SHOULD BE PREPARING YOURSELF.

WORRYING ABOUT OTHERS IS EXACTLY WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GUARDIAN. AND WHEN I GET OUT OF HERE--
HAHAHA
DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU ARE THE FIRST GUARDIAN TO BE HELD HERE?
THE MORE YOU TRY TO USE YOUR MAGIC DOWN HERE, THE STRONGER YOUR BONDS BECOME.
AND I WOULD NOT BOTHER CRYING FOR HELP EITHER.
THERE ARE CREATURES DOWN HERE FAR WORSE THAN THE ONE THAT BROUGHT YOU.
I'D HATE FOR YOU TO WAKE ANY OF THEM. THEY HAVEN'T BEEN FED FOR A VERY, VERY LONG TIME.
GULP

THE REBEL CAMP.
WHAT THE HELL IS THE POINT?!
HMMM... SORRY...WHAT WAS WHAT?
ALL OF IT. THE REBELLION. THE GUARDIAN. AND NOW FEL...
EVERY TIME WE GET KNOCKED DOWN, WE PICK OURSELVES UP, PUSH AHEAD, ONLY TO GET KICKED BACK DOWN EVEN HARDER THE NEXT TIME.
I MEAN, AT SOME POINT THERE WON'T BE ANY OF US LEFT TO GET BACK UP. AND FOR WHAT?!

WE'RE HERE. YOU CAN DROP THE ACT.
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY BELIEVE ANYONE WAS FOOLED BY THIS CHARADE OF REDEMPTION, CAN YOU?
SIR DANTE, THE "NOBLE KNIGHT"? RIGHT UP TO THE MOMENT YOU HANDED ROSE OVER TO DRUCILLA.
YOU MUST HAVE BEEN FURIOUS WHEN WE SHOWED UP AND ALMOST FOILED YOUR PLAN? WAS THAT WHY YOU BROUGHT IN THE DEMON? TO DISTRACT US?
BUT, IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US NOW, KNIGHT.
I KNOW EXACTLY WHO YOU ARE, AND THERE'S NO ONE HERE TO INTERFERE.

YOU'RE RIGHT, PRINCE FELIX.
THE TIME FOR INTERFERENCE IS DONE.
CRRAACK!
IT'S TIME FOR ACTION.
ANOTHER REBEL PRISONER FOR THE DUNGEONS.


THIS IS THE SECOND TIME YOU FALLEN HAVE FAILED ME, AVANI.
PLEASE, YOUR MAJESTY...WE THOUGHT...YOU SENT THE CREATURE TO RETRIEVE THE GUARDIAN?
I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO THINK. I TOLD YOU TO RETRIEVE THE GIRL.
GET OUT OF MY SIGHT BEFORE I DECIDE TO PUT THE ENTIRE LOT OF YOU DOWN FOR GOOD!
YES, MY QUEEN.
DOLORAZ! WHAT IS THIS "CREATURE" HE'S TALKING ABOUT?

I'VE NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A THING BEING ASSOCIATED WITH A GUARDIAN, BUT I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN FIND OUT.
WITH THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW GUARDIAN, IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE FALLEN ARE NOT AS LOYAL AS THEY ONCE WERE. MAKE SURE THORNE IS SECURE WHILE YOU'RE AT IT.
AND I'M GOING TO DESTROY THAT WRETCHED LITTLE GIRL IF IT'S THE LAST THING I--*YOU!*

MY QUEEN. I HAVE FAILED YOU. FORGIVE ME.
DANTE? BUT HOW...?
AND WHAT IS TO BE THE EXCUSE FOR YOUR FAILURE THIS TIME, KNIGHT?
AS YOU REQUESTED, I TRACKED THE SOURCE MAGIC TO A YOUNG WOMAN BY THE NAME OF ROSE. I WAS ABOUT TO SEIZE HER WHEN...
...SHE...SHE CALLED DOWN... SOME SORT OF WINGED CREATURE... AND FLED. I TRIED TO FOLLOW, BUT...I COULD NOT.

TWICE NOW TODAY HAVE I HEARD FAILURE BLAMED ON SOME SORT OF MYTHICAL WINGED DEMON.
FAILURE IS EITHER INCOMPETENCE OR BETRAYAL, DANTE.
CLANG
MEET ME IN THE LOWER DUNGEONS AT FIRST LIGHT TOMORROW MORNING. I HAVE A JOB FOR YOU.

A DEFEATIST. THAT'S WHAT MY FATHER USED TO CALL PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
I'M SORRY? I DON'T THINK I HEARD YOU CORRECTLY, BOOKWORM.
ILA AND THE RIGHTFUL KING OF TTEREVE HAVE ESCAPED DRUCILLA'S CLUTCHES.
AND ROSE HAS MANAGED TO TURN THE MOST VILE KILLER IN THE QUEEN'S ARMY INTO HER LOYAL COMPANION. BUT ALL YOU CAN THINK ABOUT IS WHAT'S GOING WRONG.
WHEN YOU'VE SACRIFICED YOUR FRIENDS TO A WORTHLESS CAUSE THEN YOU CAN JUDGE ME.
JUDGE YOU! YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT I'M GOING TO JUDGE YOU.
EVERYONE AROUND YOU IS EITHER FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIFE OR THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM AND YOU HAVE THE GALL TO ASK WHY.
WHY? BECAUSE THE ALTERNATIVE IS WORSE!
WORSE?! YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT WORSE?!

I'VE GIVEN EVERYTHING TO THIS REBELLION WHILE YOU'VE SPENT YOUR DAYS WITH YOUR NOSE SAFELY TUCKED AWAY IN SOME DUSTY BOOK.
TELL ME. HOW MANY FRIENDS HAVE YOU SEEN CUT DOWN IN FRONT OF YOU ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE?
DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT DEFEAT UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN ELBOW-DEEP IN YOUR BROTHER'S GUTS.
GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME!
HAVE THE TWO OF YOU COMPLETELY LOST YOUR MINDS?!

IF WE TURN ON EACH OTHER, DRUCILLA HAS WON.
WE WILL BE NO BETTER THAN THOSE WE FIGHT AGAINST...WE WILL NEVER HEAL FEL OR RESCUE ROSE!
ARTUS. BEFORE SHE DIED, YOUR MOTHER WROTE TO ME THAT SHE WAS WORKING ON A CURE FOR THE PLAGUE. IS IT POSSIBLE ANY OF HER NOTES SURVIVED?

I GUESS. I MEAN. I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW.
AFTER DRUCILLA... AFTER SHE DIED... I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO GO INTO HER LABORATORY.
I THINK IT'S TIME.
WILL. TAKE ARTUS AND SEE WHAT THE TWO OF YOU CAN FIND IN MADAME GRAY'S NOTES.
YEAH. SURE. WHATEVER YOU NEED, ILA. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE KID.
AS LONG AS HE KEEPS HIS FAT MOUTH SHUT.
THIS ISN'T OVER, BOOKWORM.

FELIX. LUNCH!
THAT'S ALL I COULD TAKE WITHOUT RAISING SUSPICION. SOMETHING'S UP. DRUCILLA'S GOT THE PALACE ON LOCKDOWN.

SEEMS LIKE MY SISTER IS FINALLY STARTING TO LEARN ONE REAPS WHAT ONE SOWS. THE BETRAYER NOW EXPECTS TO BE BETRAYED.
THANKS FOR THE FOOD.
AFTER THAT BLOW YOU LAID ON ME, I'M LUCKY TO BE ABLE TO CHEW.
REMEMBER THAT THE NEXT TIME YOU WANT TO GET BETWEEN ME AND RESCUING ROSE.
SHE'S CHANGED YOU. THE GIRL. WHAT IS IT ABOUT HER THAT DEMANDS SUCH PASSIONATE LOYALTY?
IF I HAVE TO EXPLAIN IT, YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
NOW GET YOUR FACE ON. EVEN WITH YOU AS UGLY AS YOU ARE NOW, YOU'RE PROBABLY STILL TOO RECOGNIZABLE.

WELL, WE CAN'T ALL BE BLESSED WITH A FACE LIKE YOURS.
IT'S LATE ENOUGH, EVERYONE SHOULD BE ASLEEP.
LET'S FIND THORNE AND ROSE BEFORE MY SISTER CHANGES HER MIND AND DECIDES TO LOP OFF YOUR HEAD TOMORROW MORNING. SHE'S FUNNY LIKE THAT.
DRUCILLA SAID SHE HAD A JOB FOR ME IN THE LOWER DUNGEONS. WE'LL START THERE.
AND YOU MIGHT WANT TO LOWER THOSE SHOULDERS A BIT THERE, PRINCELING. WORKING FOR YOUR SISTER DOESN'T EXACTLY MAKE A PERSON PROUD.
YOU FORGET. I SPENT YEARS AS HER PRISONER. I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TOO MUCH TIME WITH MY SISTER CAN DO TO A PERSON.

SHE'S NOT HERE. NEITHER OF THEM ARE.
DAMN IT! WHERE IS SHE KEEPING THEM?
PSSST. OVER HERE.
DEAR GOD! IS THAT...?

THORNE.

HE'S DEAD AND IT'S ALL MY FAULT.
NO. IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S STILL BREATHING. BARELY.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND... I THOUGHT...SHE WANTED THE KHAT. WHY WOULD SHE DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS?
SHE'S NOT TRYING TO KILL HIM, SIMON. SHE'S TRYING TO BREAK HIM.
DRUCILLA HAS MADE TORTURE INTO AN ART FORM.
WE HAVE TO FIND ROSE! NOW! IF DRUCILLA HAS DONE THAT TO THORNE...
AGREED. EVEN IF WE COULD FREE HIM, HE ISN'T IN ANY STATE TO WALK OUT OF HERE. HE NEEDS HIS GUARDIAN. WHEREVER SHE IS.

WE WILL HAVE TO PERFORM THE RITUAL TONIGHT. DRUCILLA IS BECOMING SUSPICIOUS.
SHE KNOWS YOU TOOK THE GIRL. I CAN'T RISK HER TRACKING YOU BACK TO ME.
TAKE THESE TO THE TEMPLE. I'LL FOLLOW WITH THE GIRL AS SOON AS I'VE PREPARED HER.
PREPARED HER FOR WHAT EXACTLY, DOLORA?

I'D SAY THAT I'M DISAPPOINTED IN YOU, DOLORA...
...BUT SINCE YOU TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT CRUELTY AND DECEPTION, I'M REALLY NOT ALL THAT SURPRISED.
YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO MAKE JUDGMENTS BASED ON BROKEN FRAGMENTS OF MISHEARD CONVERSATIONS.
IT'S TRUE I DIDN'T TELL YOU I'D FOUND THE GIRL, BUT ONLY SO THAT I COULD PRESENT HER TO YOU.
I COULD THINK OF NO GIFT MORE SUITABLE FOR THE BRIDE OF BALOR THAN THE ONE THING THAT STANDS BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR POSSESSION OF THE KHAT.
COME NOW POPPET, PUT THE SWORD AWAY. WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES.

YOU'RE RIGHT AS ALWAYS, DOLORA. I'VE BEEN A FOOL.
SLASH
OR I WOULD HAVE BEEN IF I CONTINUED TO BELIEVE A WORD YOU SAID.
HELLO, ROSE. YOU CAN'T IMAGINE HOW HAPPY I AM NOW THAT YOU HAVE FINALLY DECIDED TO JOIN US.
NEXT MONTH. NAME.

NEXT MONTH

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Moonstruck
Grace Ellis Shae Beagle
McCubbin Quirk Cowles
SNEAK PREVIEW
VOLUME 2:
SOME ENCHANTED EVENING
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What is *that?*
He's my pet!
I don't understand.
I've had him since I was a kid. He really taught me a lot about responsibility.
He has so many... elements. What is he?
He's Fluffy! He just is what he is!
EIGHT OF SWORDS
So he's, like, a tiny monster?
I wouldn't use that word, but it's not completely inaccurate.
And you, like, feed him?
Feed him, play with him, day-trade with him--
GREEN
BLACK
05:04:45
Ok, now I'm totally lost.
It's *Newpals!*
You know, *Newpals!* The virtual pet website *Newpals!*
You can do anything on *Newpals!* Including play the stock market!

He's technically a Princess Firmont, but he's a cross-color, so he has paraphernalia from the Spooky Gel Pen, the Futuristic Gel Pen, and the Forest Gel Pen.

...what?

newpals

Fluffy

* Customise! *

Type: Firmont
Health: 20/20
Mood: Bouyant
Hunger: Quenched
Age: 5,230 days old

DING!

Saved by the bell.

Haha, whoops. I'm sorry, I could talk about *Newpals* all day.

I can tell!

There's just so much to it! It's an infinite world and the last bastion of pleasant anonymity on the internet! *Newpals* is ***life.***

Ahhhh. Here's your tea. Haha.

I like when you talk about things you like.

Booooooo, get a room.

Hey, be nice, CT.

But yeah, sorry, we definitely need your help over here, Chet.

Manuel is gonna read Julie's book, even though she hasn't even let me read it, which is wildly offensive but also completely understandable because I am 100% positive I would be too paralyzed with adoration for her to even continue living my life after reading it.
You wrote a book?!
I--
It's actually a script for a graphic novel.
It's a Pleasant Mountain Sisters story!
Ugh, I love the Pleasant Mountain Sisters. They're so wholesome.
I could never get into--
I was always more of a Lemonade Stand Delegation kid myself.
GAH!
Hi Selena!
Ha. Hey cutie.

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Winter Finals Study Break
Gala

(slash concert for the unprivileged
#philanthropy #betascare)

An Evening of Class and Refinement

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